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Pa., *President*; Dr. Albert C. Hale, Brooklyn, N. Y., *Secretary*.

The Society for the Promotion of Agricultural Science will hold its meetings in the Library Building, August 21st and 22d. Prof. Wm. R. Lazenby, Columbus, Ohio, *President*; F. M. Webster, Wooster, Ohio, and Herbert Osborne, Ames, Iowa, *Vice-Presidents*; Prof. Charles S. Plumb, Lafayette, Indiana, *Secretary*.

The Association of Economic Entomologists will hold its eighth annual meeting in the Library Building, August 21st and 22d. C. H. Fernald, Amherst, Mass., *President*; C. L. Marlatt, Washington, D. C., *Secretary*.

The Botanical Society of America will hold its second annual meeting in Buffalo High School, on Friday and Saturday, August 21st and 22d.

The Society will be called to order by the retiring President, William Trelease, of St. Louis, on Friday, at 3 P. M. The President-elect, Charles E. Bessey, of Lincoln, will then take the chair. The afternoon session will be devoted to business. At 8 P. M. the retiring President will deliver an address in the High School chapel; subject, 'Botanical Opportunity.' The sessions of the Society for the reading of papers will be held on Saturday, at 10 A. M. and 2 P. M., in room 16, High School. Prof. C. R. Barnes, Madison, Wisconsin, *Secretary*.

The Botanical Club of the Association will meet at 9 o'clock, Tuesday morning, August 25th, in the rooms assigned for the use of Section G (Botany). Frederick V. Coville, *President*; Prof. Conway MacMillan, *Vice-President*; J. F. Cowell, *Sec'y.* and *Treas.*

The Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education will meet in the rooms of the Engineers' Society of Western New York, Library Building, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, August 20th, 21st, 22d. Prof. Mansfield Merriman, Lehigh University, *President*; Prof. C. Frank Allen, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *Treasurer*.

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

THE BULL-ROARER, OR BUZZ.

THE value of the study of games and gaming implements to ethnology is well illustrated by a monograph which is printed in the last (ninth) volume of the Transactions of the 'Verein für naturw. Unterhaltung,' of Hamburg, by Prof. J. D. E. Schmeltz, the genial editor of the 'International. Archiv. für Ethnographie.' His subject is the familiar humming toy called by our boys the buzz (German, Schwirrholtz or Waldteufel). Taking it up in the true scientific spirit, he sets about to study the various forms in which it has been made, the materials selected for its construction, the geographical localities in which its use has been reported, and the purposes for which it has been employed by various peoples. A plate is appended showing the various shapes which have been devised for it by different tribes. The result is that which is practically invariable when we examine with entire thoroughness any of these survivals from remote ancestral conditions: "We discover that one and the same implement was manufactured and connected with the same associations among tribes of the most widely different races. Does not this add another to the remarkable proofs that whether men have straight or crumpled hair, white or black skins, they are mentally so allied that their thoughts and even their follies are over and over again identically repeated?"

GEOGRAPHICAL MARKINGS ON NATIVE UTENSILS.

THE Brazilian explorer, Dr. Karl von den Steinen, calls attention in the *Ethnologisches Notizblatt*, No. 3, to a series of figures burned or scratched on the gourds used by the Lengua Indians on the Paraguay river. They represent a number of circles connected by crooked lines. Their meaning would scarcely be guessed by an observer,

but a native explained them as cartographical delineations, intended to indicate the locality where the utensil was manufactured, and the position and relative distances from it of the other villages occupied by the tribe.

This explanation seems to have valuable bearings in the interpretation of petroglyphs, and also of some of the curious markings on aboriginal pottery. It is likely that the same idea would be carried out on the soft surface of the pottery jar as on the exterior of the gourd. Some similar drawings of a topographic nature have been briefly discussed by Col. Garrick Mallery in his 'Picture Writings of the American Indians,' p. 341.

D. G. BRINTON.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

ASTRONOMY.

THE international committee having in charge the work of the Astrophotographic Chart of the Heavens met in Paris on May 11th and the following days. The proceedings of the committee related principally to the technical details of the work. The reports of the directors of the various observatories taking part in the photographic work were, however, of considerable public interest. It appears from these reports that the series of plates from the measurement of which a catalogue of all the stars down to the eleventh magnitude is to be constructed have been practically completed at nearly all the participating observatories. The second series of plates, which are to be used simply as a chart, and which will include stars several magnitudes fainter than the smallest ones admitted to the great catalogue, is also well advanced. These chart plates require a much longer exposure than the catalogue plates, and for this reason it is not possible to finish them as quickly as the others.

The measurement of the catalogue plates has progressed with satisfactory rapidity at several of the observatories, so that we may expect the first instalment of the catalogue within a very few years. The final completion of it will perhaps require twenty-five or thirty years. The

probable error of the final catalogue positions will be about one-tenth of a second of arc in either coördinate.

H. J.

THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN.

THE seventh annual report of the Missouri Botanical Garden, recently issued, contains, in addition to the scientific papers, which we hope to notice later, the administrative reports for the year 1895. From these it appears that during the past year the maintenance revenue of the institution was \$100,042.65, of which \$86,698.09 was expended for the maintenance of the revenue property, taxes (amounting to nearly \$25,000.00), and the maintenance and extension of the Garden.

It is stated that about one-third more people visited the Garden than during the previous year, on one day over 30,000 persons having been counted. As in the two preceding seasons, the growth of the *Victoria Regia* was made a prominent feature, and excited much interest. One of the most practical and direct benefits conferred by the Garden is indicated by the statement that, as in previous years, a considerable number of bedding plants were removed from the ground and potted on the approach of cold weather, and about 800 of these were distributed to hospitals, mission schools and similar charities, about half of the number going to the kindergartens of the public-school system. The provision for experimental work in horticulture and for the adequate instruction of pupils in gardening has been increased by the planting of a carefully selected orchard and the erection of a vegetable forcing house, built on the approved commercial models.

The herbarium has been increased by the incorporation of over ten thousand sheets of specimens, and now comprises some 242,000 specimens, besides over 4,000 slides, wood specimens, etc. During the past year, \$3,764.00 was spent for purchases and binding for the library, which has been increased by 3,036 books and pamphlets during the year, so that, as now constituted, it consists of 10,030 pamphlets and 9,619 volumes. These facilities have been placed freely at the service of competent investigators, in a circular similar to one that was printed in this JOURNAL a year since, and they have been used,